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## JOINT PROPERTY

592 Roussel (190, p. 428) says that the fields were planted and the crops
423 harvested in common by the members of a household or by the people living
241 at the same place [lineage]. The workers were rewarded with a feast (*hatu*), the size of which depended upon the extent of the land and the importance of the owner. The dimensions given by early voyagers for the dwelling houses suggest that several biological families, probably closely related, lived together.

235 Near the foundations of ancient houses are generally found chicken houses
422 of stone in which the fowls were kept during the night. It is impossible to
436 determine now what system of property was applied as regards poultry. Hens undoubtedly had a great value and were used for exchange. Today fowls are personal property and every man identifies his hens by an ownership mark cut on the legs. I was unable to discover whether ownership marks were used in ancient times or adopted under Chilian influence.

431 Today everyone gives freely of his clothes and of cooking and tilling
476 implements. Between relatives there is a constant exchange of gifts con-
602 forming to patterns of reciprocity. Children are permitted to use anything they need from the houses of either their paternal or maternal relatives. During his first stay on the island, Eyraud was obliged by the natives to build a boat. They gathered wood from all over the island and everyone participated in the construction of the truly "national boat."

226 The few boats on Easter Island are joint property of all those who have
422 contributed to their building, either in work or in furnishing wood. One such
501 boat belongs to seven men, and each must give his permission before the boat can be used. The joint owners of a boat fish together and divide their catch among their own families. If the canoe belongs to a single person, those who help him fish receive the least desirable fish, and the owner keeps the tuna fish.

## CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

### THIEVERY

674 The thievery of Easter Islanders has been stressed by all visitors and
577 their dishonesty has become as famous as their statues. Even when the Europeans avenged the small thefts by slaughtering the unarmed natives, the islanders continued to steal. They used the charms of their women to distract the seamen while they robbed them of their hats or handkerchiefs.

181 The thievery of the natives is not merely the result of uncontrolled desire
674 for many new and astonishing things. Their dishonesty appears innate and
577 systematic; they enjoy stealing the fruits they have given to their visitors as much as the theft of cloth or European articles. Their bartering with the white men is absolutely unscrupulous; they filled with stones the baskets

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they presented to Captain Cook (83, vol. 1, p. 579), laying a few potatoes on top. The larcenies were committed so openly and so generally that they seem to have been considered perfectly natural, although by running away the natives showed that they felt they might be punished if they were caught in the act of pilfering.

While anchored off Easter Island, Du Petit-Thouars (65, vol. 2, p. 228) received some natives on board his ship:

> The crew were busy taking off their underwear when one of the savages proved himself to be a very clever thief. He sat, as if he did not notice it, upon a red necktie which he hid very adroitly in a little basket he had with him. When obliged to give back the tie he manifested neither anger nor surprise. He tried his trick again with the hope of being more successful next time.

Geiseler (87, p. 29) says that the natives "deem it a sign of cleverness" to plunder Europeans. "We observed during our stay at Vaihu that they attempted, in every way, to recover the eggs they had already sold to us and to sell them a second time. They would burst into laughter when we noticed the theft."

When Eyraud went to the island for the first time, he was robbed of his clothing and left almost naked. Once, as he worked in a well, he was threatened with death if he did not hand over immediately the trousers he had on. Ollivier (165, p. 254) writes in a letter to his superior that "the instinct of destruction together with that of stealing appear to me as the dominant features of their character."

The islanders of today have changed very little. In trade they perpetrate the most remarkable tricks to deceive the foreigners. After the visit of the *Baquedano* in 1934, one of them boasted that he had sold a bag full of stones as antiques. For years they have robbed the Williamson-Balfour Company of cattle and sheep; in 1934 they stole more than 3,000 sheep. Their raids are not justified by necessity; the Company sells them sheep at 20 cents a head, an amount they can easily afford to pay. The company store is constantly threatened by possible plundering. Despite the police organized by company managers, it is seldom that thieves are caught in the very act of stealing. Although all know who the culprits are, no one would dare to tell their names. In Easter Island, as in Tahiti, it was probably considered smart to steal if the larceny remained undiscovered.

Thomson (215, p. 465) correctly says that the natives saw no moral delinquency in the practice of thieving. More doubtful is his statement, based on information from Salmon, that "they had a god of thieving, and successful operations were believed to be accomplished under his patronage, and only detected when not sanctioned by that spirit."

The treatment of visitors differed not at all from the methods the natives would have used among themselves had such abuse been tolerated without retaliation. Gonzalez (90, p. 98) remarks:

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181 . . . they are so fond of taking other people's property that what one man obtains
●577 another will take from him, and he yields it without feeling aggrieved; the most he will
674 do is to resist a little, then he loosens his hold of it and they remain friends. It appears as if among themselves their gods are held in common, and I believe they conceal as much as they can get possession of below the ground, for we never saw afterwards any of the things we gave them.

Legends often mention episodes in which persons who took things from others ran away to escape punishment. Modern natives steal among themselves as much as they pilfer foreigners. If they are detected they make no effort to keep the stolen goods, but quietly return it. They prefer to steal food which may be used without attracting undue attention, and they alter stolen clothes so that the legitimate owner cannot recognize them.

## PUNISHMENT OF THEFT

685 The breaking down of the old order and the deposition of the old chiefs brought about, as a natural consequence, the destruction of ancient rules of justice. No tradition has been preserved as to the maintenance of justice in ancient times. Missionaries are silent on this subject, and the later voyagers had little opportunity to inquire into the functioning of the old institutions. Thomson (215, p. 473) tried to obtain details concerning laws but had to be content with vague and contradictory statements.

Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, p. 131) says in regard to punishment for theft:

685 As for their fellow countrymen, it was very different, it is true that they robbed
696 one another as much as they could, but secretly. But woe to the thief caught in the very act by a victim stronger than himself. He might expect a terrible vengeance. Here is an instance of the barbarious deeds which might happen in such occasions. Before our arrival a young boy had stolen a chicken from the chief of Hotu-iti. The chief took the poor child by the foot with one hand and with the other he seized his thigh and then putting the leg on his knee he broke it as if it was a piece of wood.

Geiseler (87, p. 28) remarks that, inasmuch as there was no authority vested in the chiefs, the victim of a theft had to mete out justice himself:

This happens in most of the cases in such a way that the robbed person as soon as he discovers the right thief takes back what has been stolen or something else as compensation, asking for satisfaction amid loud shoutings. Very seldom do they resort to beatings or fights for this motive. A chief would in that way make justice for himself if somebody steals from him. They can never punish others for this crime.

Thomson (215, p. 465) probably on the authority of Salmon, writes:

Thieves caught in the act might be beaten, knocked about, and the aggressor was permitted to offer no resistance in the efforts to escape, although he might be the largest and the most powerful. Before the retaliation could be enforced, the theft had to be proven and fixed beyond question, then the plundered individual here was at liberty to recover the value of the loss from any property available belonging to the robber, and in the event of the value not being recovered, articles of value could be destroyed to equalize the amount. Retaliation for theft could be enforced by the weak and feeble against the strong and powerful, and any resistance would call to their aid the entire community.

9: Forster T-5 (1774) 1777
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the ſun. Here we reſted a while, and then deſcended by a different route into another ſet of fields, which were treated in the ſame manner as the reſt. None of them had any ſort of encloſures, though the hiſtorians of Roggewein's voyage, who ſeem to have conſulted fancy more than truth, make mention of them. The encreaſing heat of the day had entirely exhauſted us, when we had ſtill a conſiderable way to make down to the ſea-ſide. Fortunately we paſſed by a native who was at work, gathering potatoes in one of the fields. We complained of great thirſt to him, upon which, though he was on old man, he immediately ran to a large plantation of ſugar-canes, and brought us a great load of the beſt and juicieſt on his back. We made him ſome preſents in return for them, cut them into walking-ſticks, and, as we went along, gradually peeled and ſucked them, finding their juice extremely refreſhing. 1774. MARCH.

At our return to the landing-place we found captain Cook ſtill occupied in trading with the inhabitants, who brought him ſome fowls ready dreſſed, and ſome matted baſkets full of ſweet potatoes, but ſometimes deceived him by filling the baſket with ſtones, and only laying a few potatoes at the top. The moſt valuable article of trade on our part were empty coco-nut ſhells, which we had received at the Society and Friendly Iſlands; but they were not current, unleſs the hole in them was very ſmall, or unleſs they had a cover. The Taheitian and European cloths